



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	PAGOSA SPRINGS, CO	Accident Number:	FTW95FA002
Date & Time:	10/01/1994, 1420 MDT	Registration:	N1480X
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-28R-200	Injuries:	3 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Instructional		

Analysis

PRIVATE PILOTS, ENROLLED IN A PROFESSIONAL PILOT COURSE, WERE BUILDING CROSS COUNTRY FLIGHT TIME FOR THEIR COMMERCIAL CERTIFICATION. ON THE RETURN FLIGHT FROM CALIFORNIA TO TEXAS, ROUTING WAS PLANNED THROUGH COLORADO FOR THE INSTRUCTIONAL PORTION OF THE MOUNTAIN CURRICULUM. AIRMETS INCLUDED WEATHER ADVISORIES FOR TURBULENCE. THE FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR AMENDED THE FLIGHT ROUTE AND CONTINUED EVEN THOUGH FLIGHT WATCH ISSUED THE AIRMET FOR TURBULENCE AND THAT VFR WAS NOT RECOMMENDED. COMPANY PERSONNEL REPORTED THAT THE FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR HAD MADE NUMEROUS FLIGHTS ALONG THE REGULAR MOUNTAIN FLYING CURRICULUM ROUTE (HIGHEST ELEVATION 9,927 FEET); HOWEVER, 'THIS WAS THE INSTRUCTOR'S FIRST TRIP CROSSING THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE THROUGH THE CANYON AT ELWOOD PASS' AN ELEVATION OF 11,875 FEET. DENSITY ALTITUDE WAS CALCULATED AT 14,000 FEET. THIS WAS THE FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR'S SECOND DEMONSTRATION THAT DAY FOR A 180 DEGREE TURN- AROUND PROCEDURE IN A BOX CANYON ENVIRONMENT. THE INSTRUCTOR STATED THAT 'NEAR THE COMPLETION OF THE TURN, WE EXPERIENCED A SEVERE UNEXPECTED DOWNDRAFT' WITH A RESULTING RATE OF DESCENT OF '6,000 FPM' AND THE AIRPLANE HIT THE TREES.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S CONTINUED FLIGHT INTO KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER. FACTORS WERE THE PILOT'S LACK OF FAMILIARITY WITH THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA, THE TURBULENCE AND HIGH DENSITY ALTITUDE.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING - TURN TO REVERSE DIRECTION

Findings

1. TERRAIN CONDITION - BLIND/BOX CANYON
2. (F) LACK OF FAMILIARITY WITH GEOGRAPHIC AREA - PILOT IN COMMAND(CFI)
3. (C) FLIGHT INTO KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER - CONTINUED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - TURBULENCE
5. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - HIGH DENSITY ALTITUDE

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline Transport; Flight Instructor	Age:	42
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane Multi-engine; Airplane Single-engine; Instrument Airplane
Flight Time:	7400 hours (Total, all aircraft), 400 hours (Total, this make and model), 7200 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 69 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 30 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N1480X
Model/Series:	PA-28R-200 PA-28R-200	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	LE TOURNEAU UNIVERSITY	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
Operating Certificate(s) Held:		Engine Model/Series:	IO-360-C1C
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Instructional		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	ALS, 7535 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 12000 ft agl	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	15 knots / , 210°
Temperature:	19° C	Visibility	10 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	PAGE, AZ (PGA)	Destination:	ALAMOSA, CO (ALS)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	2 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Latitude, Longitude:			

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): JOYCE M SMITH,

Adopted Date: 05/18/1995

Investigation Docket: NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at pubinq@ntsb.gov, or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/>.

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